

Mussel Ridge News

A Free Publication of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society
Owls Head, Maine
Winter 2013 ~ Issue 17



BATTERY POINT

The Civil War Comes to Penobscot Bay

In our Fall newsletter we wrote about a pair of gun batteries that were built on Rockland Harbor in late summer of 1863; one at Jameson Point on the northeast shore and another at a spot called Halfway Point on the Owl's Head side of the harbor. Each site had an earthen covered magazine to store the powder and shot for its five cannons. The tops of these magazines were high enough to serve as observation posts for a lookout to view incoming ship traffic or to assist in directing the cannon fire.

Let's recap why these batteries were built. Due to an economic depression just prior to the Civil War, the bulk of civilian ship building on the Atlantic coast was concentrated in New Hampshire and Maine which made our small unprotected harbors and river landing vulnerable to invasion by the Confederate Navy. As the war progressed, the reality of such an invasion became eminent.

The Confederate States entered the war with nothing that resembled a navy. But, within a year, many Naval officers from the south had resigned their Union commissions and returned to their home state to organize the hodge podge of private vessels that had been donated to the southern cause. Contracts were also made with foreign countries to build special deep water cruisers capable of plying the world's oceans. Their primary mission was to intercept and destroy any ship supplying goods or arms to the Union forces. A secondary goal was to sink as many fishing vessels as possible in an effort to deliver a blow to the northern economy. The Mussel Ridge Historical Society wondered if any Maine ships had the misfortune to make the acquaintance of the Confederate States Navy. David Sulin, a local civil war historian, says the first to cross their path was Rockland's Captain Packard with the *Ocean Eagle*. Many others would join the *Ocean Eagle*.



This model of the Jameson Point gun battery (circa 1863) is on display at the Rockland Historical Society.

On May 4, 1861, CSS *Savannah*, a privateer under the command of Capt. Thomas H. Baker while patrolling the South Carolina coast made her first, and only, capture when she intercepted the Rockland based brig, *Joseph*. She was laden with sugar from Cuba consigned to Welch & Co. at Philadelphia. (Some historians believe the phrase, "...sugar from Cuba" should be interpreted "rum") Since *Joseph's* crew made no attempt to elude the *Savannah*, nor were they able to fight, the brig was peacefully escorted into Georgetown, S.C. where she was eventually auctioned off. Within hours of this incident the *Savannah* was captured by U.S.S. *Perry*, which had been commissioned just eleven days earlier at the New York Navy Yard.

On July 9, 1861, the CSS *Jefferson Davis* under the command of Captain Louis M. Coxsetter, was cruising 100 miles southeast of Nantucket Shoals reaping a rich harvest of Yankee ships. One prize was the brig *Mary E. Thompson* out of Searsport, Maine, bound for Montevideo with lumber. On August 5, Capt. Coxsetter seized the brig *Santa Clara* of Eastport, Me., loaded with Puerto Rican sugar, (rum?) bound for New York. The crew of the *Santa Clara* and all the captives from previous seizures were put aboard the schooner *Windward*, another of Coxsetter's prizes, and set free to sail to the nearest port. The researchers found that although captured vessels and cargoes were destroyed, in most encounters, the civilian crews were treated with dignity and respect.

In July, 1862, CSS *Alabama*, one of the foreign built cruisers, under command of Captain Raphael Semmes began patrolling the North Atlantic with a particular interest in the Grand Banks fishermen. (Semmes was married to a woman from Portland, Maine and by some accounts she, "...could be a real shrew when it came to her domestic responsibilities") As winter set in, Captain Semmes headed for the South Atlantic searching for New England whalers. March, 1863, he waylaid *Louisa Hatch*, a Rockland Maine ship heavily laden with coal from Cardiff. After transferring some of the coal to the *Alabama*, the crew of the *Louisa Hatch* was given the option of pledging their allegiance to the Confederacy or being put ashore on neutral territory. Most of them chose to remain loyal to the Union and, after several days of exposure to cold rain and short rations they were put ashore on a remote island off the coast of South America. Another attempt to transfer the coal to the *Alabama* was made. When that failed, *Louisa Hatch* was towed out to sea and burned. Within a few days, the crew of the *Louisa Hatch* was able to secure a boat for a stormy trip to Brazil.

August 20, 1863, while patrolling the North Atlantic, the CSS *Florida*, another of the foreign built cruisers, captured the Rockland built bark, *Anglo Saxon* just four days out of Liverpool with a load of coal destined for New York. Some of the coal was confiscated; the bark was burned. Previous to this event, Lieutenant C.W. Read, an officer aboard the *Florida*, was given command of a captured schooner, *Archer*, which he boldly sailed into Portland, Me. Harbor where he seized the revenue cutter, *Caleb Cushing*. Lieutenant Read and crew were captured attempting to escape with the cutter.

August, 1864, the CSS *Tallahassee* (a.k.a. *Olustee*), a twin screw blockade runner capable of fourteen knots, took up patrolling from Wilmington, Delaware into the North Atlantic. Skippered by J.T. Wood, *Tallahassee* captured the schooners *Magnolia* and *Pearl of Friendship* Maine, and the *Sea Flower*; (home port unknown) while cruising Penobscot Bay. *Tallahassee* also captured the 80 ft. schooner *Josiah Achorn*, off the Nova Scotia coast and burned her. The *Josiah Achorn* had been launched in 1852 at Rockland, Maine. Schooners *A.J. Bird* and *E. F. Lewis* from Rockland, bark *Glenavon* of Thomaston, schooner *Restless* from Boothbay, were likewise ordered to “hove to” and subsequently burned by the *Tallahassee*. The brig, *Atlantic*, home port unknown, was also captured Aug. 12 or 13, and burned off the New Jersey coast. Our researchers think this may have been the same *Atlantic* that was built at Owl’s Head in 1850. As of this writing, we have not been able to confirm that it was the same vessel. It’s crew, along with other captives, was put aboard another prize vessel and allowed to sail themselves to a neutral country.

Eventually, the South resorted to employing the smaller captured vessels in a plot of sabotage. Instead of burning them at sea, they were converted into raiders with deck guns camouflaged under nets and rebels hiding in the hold. Then, piloted by the original skipper, these innocent looking fishing boats returned to home port with the intent to destroy anything along the waterfront that could assist the Union forces.


Although the Confederate States Navy literally evolved from nothing, they quickly became a very real threat world wide. The folks on the Maine coast had good reason to fortify their ports. The blockade runner, CSS *Tallahassee* could have easily slipped into Rockland Harbor and raised cane along the waterfront. Likewise, the CSS *Alabama* and CSS *Florida* spent considerable time patrolling the Gulf of Maine. At the time, many of Maine's politicians and retired veterans thought the placement of gun batteries at our small ports was grossly inadequate when compared to the threat. But, we could find no evidence of any attempts to invade Rockland Harbor. In retrospect, it could be argued that those two batteries providing overlapping coverage of the entrance to the harbor did in fact deter the enemy from such thoughts. In this case the plan worked. Both sites have been lost to development and erosion. However, one bit of memorabilia remaining is that Owl's Head's Halfway Point is now labeled Battery Point on most nautical charts.

Ship to Shore Lobster Company, LLC
 “Live Lobster at the Wharf”

Rodney & Anna Mason
 7 Wharf Street
 Owls Head, ME 04854

207-594-4606 Wharf
 207-542-4245 Rodney’s Cell
 207-542-8490 Anna Cell
 207-594-0621 Home

www.shiptoshorelobster.com



Cape Air
NANTUCKET
AIRLINES

Reservations 800-352-0714
www.flycapeair.com

Rocky Stenger
RKD Station Manager

Cape Air
23 Terminal Lane
Owls Head, ME 04854
207-596-7604 Office
207-701-7189 Cell
207-596-7601 Fax
rstenger@flycapeair.com

“I DIDN’T KNOW THAT!”

Both sides in the Civil War found it necessary to draft recruits when volunteer enlistment declined. The Union Army draftees were 20 to 45 years in age while the Confederate States drafted men from 18 to 50. Each side allowed a draftee to pay someone to take their place which inspired the homily, “A rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight”

At the end of his enlistment, a soldier often found himself far from home and broke. He could earn a bonus of \$300 just by signing up for another three years. The money was a tidy sum, but he’d had enough of marching from battle to battle. Many soldiers re-enlisted for Naval duty. Better to ride than walk.



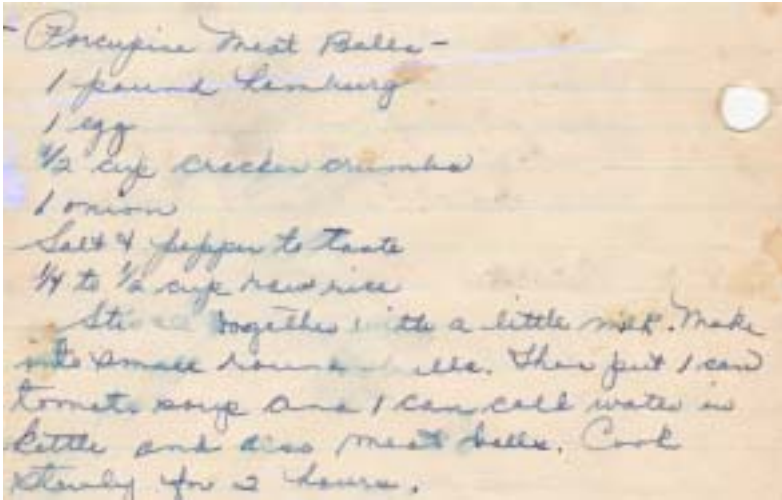
The Perry Family of Owl's Head (So. Thomaston), ME. have posted about this family and the men they sent to the Civil War. Someone sent me a photo of the only one who survived the war, Levi G. Perry. This photo is of a reunion of old soldiers. *Photo by Helen Corbett*



Porcupine Meatballs Recipe



Myrtle & Maynard Curtis



Porcupine meatballs originated during the great depression, when meat was scarce and rice was cheap. This makes a nice wintertime comfort food dish the whole family will love. This recipe comes from the cookbook of my maternal grandmother Myrtle Gamage Curtis.

<p>Computerized Services Bookkeeping, Payroll, Taxes, Spreadsheets Linda Post</p> <p>40 Hendrickson Point Rd Owls Head, ME 04854</p> <p>Phone 207-594-7203 Cell 207-441-7203 linpost@midcoast.com</p>	<p align="center">OWLS HEAD VILLAGE LIBRARY</p> <p align="center"> 31 South Shore Drive Owls Head, ME 04854 Hours: Sat. 9 am - 5 ish Internet Access, DVD's, Children's Room, Large Print Large Marine Books Selection WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT - STOP BY!</p>
---	---

CALL YOUR CLASSMATES! MARK YOUR CALENDER!



Friday, May 10, the Mussel Ridge Historical Society will host it's third Spring reunion of one room school students. And, this year we're inviting the students from the Owl's Head Central School to join us.

The evening will begin at 6 p.m. with a potluck supper followed by roll call, class pictures, discussions and reminiscences. Bring a guest, your camera and any mementos such as pictures, toys, books, lunch boxes, anecdotes and stories from those special years. RESERVE MAY 11th ON YOUR CALLENDER

CRUMBS

Did you know that of all the Americans who eat peanut butter & jelly sandwiches, 98.6 % spread the peanut butter first, then the jelly? And did you know that sales of grape jelly last year totaled 156 million dollars? But did you also know that strawberry jams outsold the grape by eleven million dollars?

What's your favorite peanut butter "go-with"? This reporter recommends peanut butter & crispy bacon, peanut butter & raisin, peanut butter & thinly sliced apple or peanut butter & mayonnaise. Elvis liked peanut butter and banana sandwiches!



ATTENTION MUSSEL RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERS- Effective September first your membership dues were payable for anyone who is not a Life Member. The annual dues are \$5.00 per year or purchase a life membership with a one time payment of \$100. Make your check payable to: M.R.H.S. and send it to P.O. Box 133, Owl's Head, Me. 04854

For further info. call Linda at 207-594-2438

B.C. Electric, Inc.
Electrical Contractor

Tel (207) 594-2955
Fax (207) 594-0484
email: bcelec@hotmail.com

Bob Carlson, Jr., Chip Priestly, Doug Hammond, Dan Holden


Owls Head General Store



Rob & Sherree Craig
Owners

207-596-6038
info@owlsheadgeneralstore.com

2 South Shore Drive
Owls Head, ME 04854



MURRAY BUILDERS INC.

- General Contracting
- Remodeling
- Lawn Care
- General Property Maintenance
- Snow Plowing
- New Homes

Les Murray, Owner
2 Knowlton Place, Owls Head, ME 04854 Ph: 207-557-4315
Fax: 207-594-2856

Maine Coast Personal Assistance Services, LLC
... tailoring to your needs and to your life style



Trina L. French
P O Box 491
Rockland, Maine 04841

phone: 207-542-3329
fax: 207-594-2856
info@mainecoastperservices.com
www.mainecoastperservices.com



Absolut Accounting & Tax Services
Specializing in Commerical Fisherman,
Small Businesses, & Construction Trades
Deborah M Damon, Sole Proprietor
465 South Shore Dr, Owls Head, ME 04854
Tel: 207-594-8565 Cell: 207-691-8565
Fax: 207-596-0517
E-mail: deborahmdamon@hotmail.com
Member of Chamber of Commerce, AIPB, &
a QuickBooks Advisor.
www.absolutaccounting.com

Smiths' Swiss Village
Housekeeping Cottages
Irving & Marilyn Smith
152 North Shore Drive
Owls Head, ME 04854
Tel. 207-594-4039 marilynksmith@roadrunner.com
Fax 207-594-4039

TOWNFOLKS- Valentines Forever

When a young person decides to join the military they must take whatever assignment is given them and let the consequences be whatever. For a young Navy Bos'un mate those orders took him out of choice duty in the South Pacific and brought him to Knox County, Maine. BM2 Philip Stone, "Chet" to his friends, was sent here to help build the Navy Flight Training Center at Ash Point. He had no idea how that transfer would change his life.

One hot afternoon, the galley back door was left open allowing a breeze to blow through when a stray dog dashed in and snatched a piece of meat off the counter. Chet followed in hot pursuit to a nearby farm house. He knocked on the door which was opened by a teen aged girl. Upon being informed that her dog had been stealing food from the Navy galley, she apologized several times on behalf of her family. Ultimately this encounter ended with an invitation to Chet and his buddies to come back for a home cooked meal. *Now, You don't have to be Dick Tracy to figure out where this going.*

Chet Stone and Freda Woodman were married on his birthday, 1942. They've had a comfortable life here in Owl's Head working at the former National Sea Products; he on the loading docks while she worked as a fish packer. In their spare time, a vegetable garden, the local Grange, the Baptist church and his dogs required their attention. Happy Valentine's Day to each and everyone of our readers.

Mr. & Mrs. Stone, Feb. 2012



The following letter is courtesy of Ed Coffin

October 24th, 1960
V.W. SMITH
8 Lexington Avenue
Bradford, Mass.

Dear Miss Borgerson:

At one of the Fireman's suppers I noticed table decorations of pink pond lilies, and I knew without asking, that they must have come from that pond out back of the Cemetery, where my Grandfather planted them nearly seventy years ago. Those bulbs originally came from Bermuda and there is a story in connection worth the telling.

My Grandmother's daughter, Lucy, was married to one Capt. Manford Dyer, captain and part owner of the three masted schooner the Maynard Sumner, engaged in the coast-wide trade extending from Maine to the West Indies.

On this particular voyage, my aunt and cousin Edgar were aboard. It was February and the Captain was on his way from Cuba to New York with a cargo. When off the Harbor, they were hit with a heavy gale that soon iced the hull and sails so that they were obliged to put away the sails, put about and run before it under bare poles.

In the process of coming about, the mate was lost overboard as the seas were extremely high. So for nine days they ran before the storm and finally were picked up off Bermuda and towed to port there.

All were in rather poor shape, and an English family by the name of Hayward took the Captain, my Aunt and Cousin into their house, gave them what ever they needed for their comfort until such time as the vessel could be outfitted when they resumed the voyage back to Rockland.

Grandmother Farr, who was always grateful for any good deed to any of her kin, wrote a letter to the Haywards,

thanking them for their kindness, resulting in friendly correspondence over a period of years and finally a visit by the Hayward family to Owls Head, where as a boy I can recall meeting them.

At the time of this visit Grandfather was engaged in landscaping the old cemetery, and in hauling gravel out back, leaving quite a pit that quickly filled with water, and when Mrs. Hayward saw the pond, asked if they would like some lily bulbs and which in due course she sent; there were colors in pink, yellow and white and they were a sight to behold in those early days.

And that is how those pink lilies happened to decorate the festive table at your Fireman's Supper, seventy years later.

Sincerely,

V.W. Smith

The Schooner Maynard Sumner was a 3 mast schooner. It was built in Rockland in 1882 by Cobb & Bodwell. It was lost in 1899. G.T. 384, 143' x 28' x 10'



234 Park St • PO Box 485

Heating Oils • LP Gas • Gasoline • Diesel
24 Hour Service
Heating Equipment Sales • Convenience



Elaine J. McNeilly, CPF

156 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROCKLAND, MAINE 04841
TELEPHONE: 207 596-7476
FAX: 207 594-7244
www.primroseframing.com

Bill and Jeanne Johnson
Proprietors

(207) 594-1721

Breakwater
VINEYARDS

Breakwater Vineyards and Farm, LLC
35 Ash Point Drive, P.O. Box 404, Owls Head, ME 04854

PENOBSCOT ISLAND AIR



Kevin Waters

Director of Operations

PO Box 273 ~ South Thomaston, ME 04858
207-596-7500